

# Nebraska Traffic Safety Facts

## Motorcycle Helmets (2003)

CRASH OUTCOME DATA  
EVALUATION SYSTEM  
(CODES)



Nebraska Health and Human Services System

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motorcycle helmets are effective in preventing deaths and serious injuries, including brain injuries. Helmet laws translate into increased helmet usage, reduced injuries and saved lives, which in turn reduces costs to society. NHTSA also stated “unhelmeted motorcycle riders cost more to treat at the hospital, spend a longer time in rehabilitation, and are more likely to require some form of public assistance to pay medical bills and rehabilitation. Moreover, an unhelmeted motorcyclist is more likely to be an uninsured rider. Taxpayers could be picking up a large portion of the medical costs for unhelmeted victims”.

Data from the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety indicates that helmet use reduces

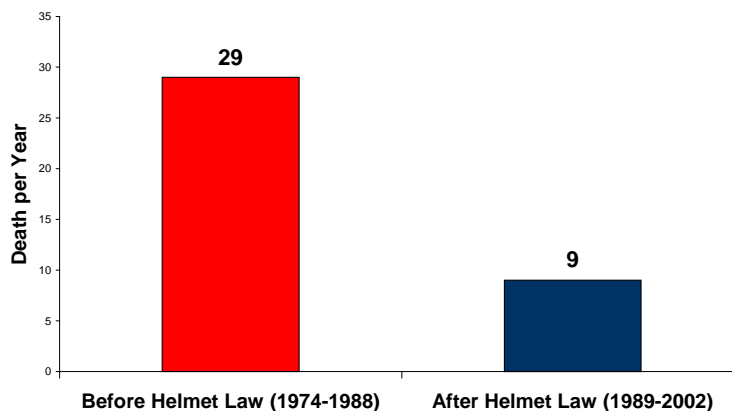
fatalities. While approximately 29 motorcycle riders were killed each year during 1974 to 1988, before Nebraska’s helmet law went into effect, only nine motorcycle crash deaths per year occurred during 1989 to 2002 (after the helmet law became effective in 1989).

Based on the Nebraska Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System, Medicaid paid about \$ 5.5 million for health care to patients with head injuries in 2001 alone. NHTSA has confirmed that unhelmeted motorcyclists are more than three times as likely to suffer a brain injury as are those who are helmeted.

Nebraska and 19 other states, along with the District of Columbia, have enacted helmet laws to cover all motorcycle operators and passengers. The observed helmet use rate in Nebraska is nearly 100 percent. In 2002, Nebraska motorcycle operators, age 20 and under, accounted for 2% of all motorcycle operators.

NHTSA has also reported that motorcycle deaths and injuries increased in Texas and Arkansas following helmet law repeal.

**Motorcycle Crash Deaths Before and After Helmet Law  
in Nebraska**



Source: Nebraska Health and Human Services System, CODES program

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